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Senate

The Senate met at 9:36 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MITCH MCCONNELL, a Senator from the State of Kentucky.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, our God, the heavens declare Your glory and the firmament shows Your handiwork. Give us today the faith and willingness to follow You with faithfulness. Thank You for revealing Yourself to us and the wonders of Your creation. Reveal to us creative ways to contribute to Your purposes.

Sustain our Senators in their work. Remind them that true prayer is more than words; it is acting in Your name. Lead them to a commitment to continue Your liberating thrust in our world. Use them to unshackle captives and to lift heavy burdens.

Help us all to follow the narrow path of service. We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MITCH MCCONNELL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 16, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MITCH MCCONNELL, a Senator from the State of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MCCONNELL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ISAKSON). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the distinguished acting majority leader.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning we will have a period of morning business for up to 30 minutes and then resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2271, the USA PATRIOT Act Reauthorizing Amendments Act.

As a reminder, at 10:30 this morning we will have a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to that bill. As under the previous order, if cloture is invoked, we will proceed immediately to the bill itself. We still have a number of items to complete before next week's recess. The leader will have more to announce on the schedule later in the day.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, and the second half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

USA PATRIOT ACT

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, within the hour, we will cast our votes on whether to proceed on the debate on the extension of the PATRIOT Act, which I intend to vote for, both to proceed and then finally for that act.

I rise this morning to reflect on my strong support for the PATRIOT Act and also express some of my frustration with those who have questioned its use with regard to our civil liberties.

I was born in the United States of America in 1944. I am 61 years old. The inalienable rights endowed by our Creator that our forefathers built this Government on, of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, have been the cornerstones of my life. They are the foundation of all our civil liberties. They allowed me to pursue a business career, a marriage, the raising of a family, the educating of children, and allowed me to proceed to the highest office I could have possibly ever imagined: a Member of the Senate. Because of God's blessings and the blessings of this country, last week I was blessed with two grandchildren, born 61 years after I was but into a country that still is founded on the cornerstones of the great civil liberties of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But Sarah Katherine and Riley Dianne, my two granddaughters, were born into a totally different world—the same country but a different world.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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